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DE RUEHNJ #0968/01 2001423
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4113
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1211
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0829
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0693
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1135
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0276
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1478
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2746
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1883
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1275
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0607
RUEHG/USMISSION GENEVA 0775
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0838
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 0270

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000968

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2016

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SUBJECT: CHAD/DARFUR: NMRD CLAIMS CHADIAN PRESSURE TO JOIN
JEM AGAINST SLA/MM

Classified By: POL/ECON OFFICER MICHAEL P. ZORICK, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY:

¶1. (C) The Darfur rebel group National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD) has indicated a desire to revisit its objections to the DPA, and implied a readiness to support DPA implementation. The group's General Secretary has stated that the group must be recognized as a valid interlocutor and participant in all future discussions of DPA implementation, and sanctions lifted against its current Revolutionary Council Chairman, Gibril Abdel-Karim Bari. The NMRD is under heavy pressure from some Chadian authorities to join the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in active opposition to DPA implementation and DPA signatory Minni Minawi's Sudan Liberation Army faction (SLA/MM). END SUMMARY.

WE WANT TO BE COOPERATIVE

¶2. (C) National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD) General Secretary Khalil Abdullah met July 18 with Ambassador, at the former's request. Abdullah recalled that NMRD leaders had had extensive conversations with Embassy's POL/ECON officer after the May 5 signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). He said they had made clear that their principal objections to the DPA were (a) that they had not been participants in its negotiation, and (b) that there were inadequate individual compensation provisions in the agreement.

¶3. (C) Abdullah pointed out that he must be able to sell the agreement in the refugee camps where NMRD followers are living. He said this is a very difficult task when he has no individual compensation to offer people who have been denied access to their homeland for several years, and have

essentially lost everything.

¶ 14. (C) More generally, Abdullah stressed that the issue of individual compensation had become Dr. Khalil Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement's (JEM -- from which the NMRD had split in March 2004) only talking point in opposing the DPA in the camps. According to Abdullah, JEM leaders tell refugees and IDPs that Minni Minawi's Sudan Liberation Army faction (SLA/MM) has taken all the money that should have gone to the people, and that the JEM is under fire from the USG and UN because of its Islamic roots. Abdullah suggested that Abdel Wahid Mohamed el-Nur's SLA faction (SLA/AW) is using the same approach, in coordination with the JEM.

¶ 15. (C) Abdullah's message was that the NMRD leadership, which he said was essentially composed of himself and former Chadian army officer Gibril Abdel-Karim Bari, would prefer to be seen as cooperative toward the DPA; as ready to discuss their difficulties with the agreement, without necessarily re-opening it; and as prepared to sign on to agreement implementation. What the NMRD needed to allow for this was recognition from the UN, AU, and USG as a viable movement in all further Darfur discussions, and the lifting of sanctions against Gibril Abdel-Karim.

CAUGHT IN THE CROSS-FIRE

¶ 16. (C) Abdullah set out some of the NMRD's current realities as an explanation for the difficult position in which the movement finds itself. He pointed out that NMRD forces were camped in the area of the Chadian border town of Adde on July

NDJAMENA 00000968 002 OF 003

3, 2006 when the area came under Chadian rebel attack. He said Chadian rebels also fired on NMRD forces en route to the attack against the Chadian army. He suggested that, despite NMRD attempts to maintain relations of non-interference with Chadian rebel groups, these are receiving Sudanese financial and material support, and so are under Khartoum's pressure to strike at both Darfur rebels and Chad's government forces.

¶ 17. (C) Abdullah stressed that one of the reasons the NMRD was located inside Chad was to avoid being accused of actively acting as DPA spoilers inside Darfur. This went hand in hand with NMRD's continued rejection of JEM and SLA/AW requests to join forces against the SLA/MM and DPA implementation.

CHADIAN THREATS

¶ 18. (C) Abdullah described what the NMRD saw as the current state of play in Chad's relations to the Darfur conflict. He said that the Chadian President's half-brother, Daoussa Deby, is a driving force behind JEM's harassment of and attacks against the SLA/MM. He supported the consistently-heard -- but also consistently denied -- rumors that Daoussa, operating on behalf of the Deby regime, is funneling resources to JEM so that JEM will behave as a proxy or mercenary force against Chadian rebels in the Sudan/Chad border area. That JEM also has a more "national" (read: anti-Khartoum) agenda is a bonus for Chad's President.

¶ 19. (C) Daoussa Deby had also been the conduit for Chadian government support to NMRD, but according to Abdullah, that support has dwindled to nearly nothing. This is because Daoussa has made it contingent upon NMRD cooperation with JEM against Khartoum, which implied NMRD military action against the SLA/MM, as the later had signed on to the DPA, and thus was in league with Khartoum. Daoussa sees NMRD as militarily capable and wants those capabilities to reinforce JEM. Abdullah also believed that Daoussa's support for JEM actions against the SLA/MM was linked to Daoussa Deby's personal animosities in regard to Minni Minawi. While NMRD still has

contact with the Chadian authorities through the recently promoted Brigadier General Mahamat Ismail Chaibo (who is a direct family relation to NMRD leaders), Daoussa has become the only channel for money, and he is now openly hostile to the NMRD. "He tells us, to join JEM, or be destroyed."

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

¶10. (C) Abdullah stated point-blank that time is running out for DPA implementation. He said that there are declining numbers of Darfur rebel or political leaders willing to support the DPA among the people. The SLA/MM's increasing isolation as the only group fully backing the DPA puts it into a class by itself -- the Khartoum collaborators. JEM and the SLA/AW are spoiling in Darfur, with Chadian government support, including attacks on SLA/MM. The NMRD is vulnerable now on all fronts -- from Chadian rebels in the pay of Khartoum; from JEM, for continued refusal to join forces; from Daoussa Deby and Chadian government forces, for continued refusal to join JEM. The NMRD has no interest in JEM's "national" agenda, having only a Darfur focus. Abdullah repeated that the NMRD's objections to the DPA could be worked out, but only if NMRD could get a seat at the table, and sanctions could be lifted. He implied that NMRD had the credibility needed in Darfur to be a positive player in shifting the balance in favor of DPA implementation.

COMMENT

NDJAMENA 00000968 003 OF 003

¶11. (C) NMRD's motives for seeking us out at this time may be many, and not especially tied to a sudden desire to support the DPA. Not least among them may be personal difficulties NMRD leadership has with Daoussa Deby. The fact that the movement appears to have no allies inside Darfur cannot be a comfortable position, and now it seems its Chadian benefactors have issued an ultimatum: prove useful to us in our conflict with Khartoum, or get out. We believe key members of the Deby regime remain determined to buy allies against the regime's enemies, but we are not clear that they have made the connection between the friends they pay and those friends' attitudes toward the DPA -- and ultimately, the probability that they will be seen as engaged in sanctionable opposition to the DPA. Regardless of where one comes out in analyzing their motivations, we still do not have verifiable information as to their actions. We hope that those international allies of the DPA operating inside both Sudan and Chad, especially the AMIS forces, will be energized to clear some of the doubt surrounding the many accusations leveled against DPA spoilers and their probable financial benefactors. END COMMENT.

¶13. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
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